# A Butterfly Smile

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Level 3

"Line up class! Let’s go to the park," Laila Miss says.

All the students hold hands, chattering away. Kavya stands by herself.

As they start walking, Laila Miss asks, "Does anyone know what a caterpillar becomes when it grows up?"

Kavya’s stomach flips. She knows the answer! Should she say something?

Kavya and her family have just moved to Bengaluru from her village.

They live at the construction site where her parents work. It’s hard living in a half-finished house. The air smells of smoke, and the honking traffic makes it hard to sleep. The towering buildings, zooming cars, and busy people make her feel very, very small.

Kavya has been coming to school for a week. She still hasn’t spoken to anyone.

What if they make fun of her accent? Or tease her because she’s never been to school before?
Kavya takes a deep breath and raises her hand. In a noisy city like Bengaluru, she can’t be quiet forever.

"When caterpillars grow up, they become butterflies," Kavya says.

"That’s right!" Laila Miss says.

"Caterpillars are only caterpillars for a few weeks," Kavya says. "They spend that whole time eating leaves."

"They must get very big," says Mary, her classmate.

"They do!"

"After they eat and eat and eat, caterpillars weave cocoons on the sides of plants. They go inside, where they grow and change," says Kavya.

"That’s correct," Laila Miss says. "They stay in the cocoons for about two weeks. When they come out, they are butterflies."

"Look, we’re at the park!" Mary says.
Kavya gasps. The park is covered in butterflies!

Blue butterflies the colour of rivers.
Yellow butterflies the colour of sunlight.
Orange butterflies the colour of ripe chikoos.
Black-and-white butterflies the colours of starry skies.

These are all the colours Kavya misses from her village.

She feels her heart flutter.

"Every year, butterflies travel thousands of kilometres to come to this park. They are here formore food, better weather, and a safe place to lay eggs," Laila Miss says. "This journey is called migration."

"Don’t they get tired, flapping their wings for so long?" a classmate asks.

"If there is a strong wind, they don’t have to flap their wings," Kavya says. "They spread their wings and glide."

"That must be bumpy," Mary whispers to Kavya.

Kavya thinks about the bus ride to Bengaluru – squeezed in between all the luggage. Bumping and tumbling for hours and hours and hours.

Is that how a butterfly feels on the wind?

"When butterflies migrate, they follow rivers. To stay healthy, they stop along the riverbank to soak up minerals with their feet. It’s called mud-puddling," Laila Miss says.

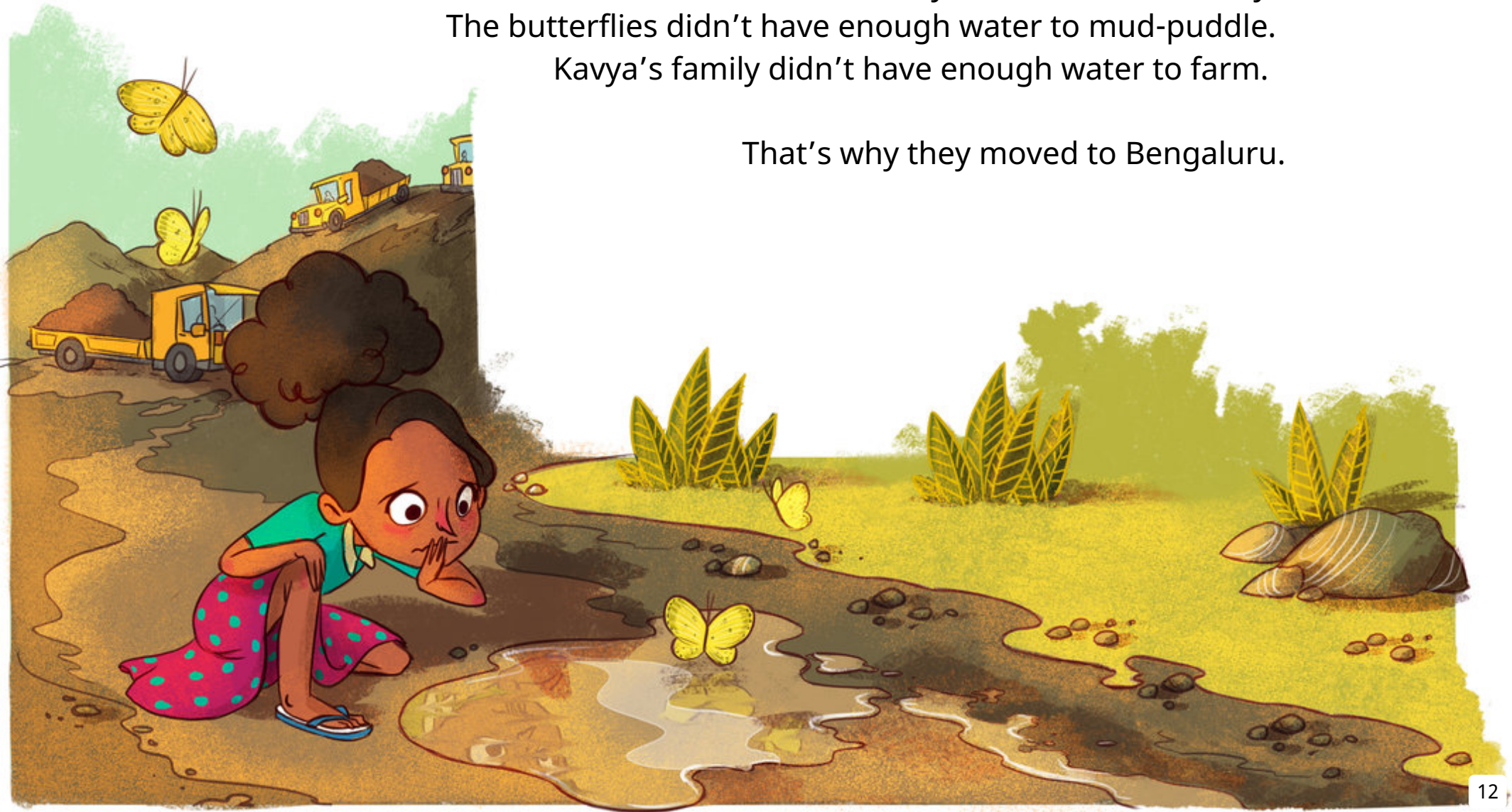
"Mud-puddling?" Mary says. "That sounds like fun."

Mary and Kavya smile at each other.

"It is," Kavya says. "But now puddles are hard to find."

In Kavya’s village, men in trucks take sand away from the river. The weather gets hotter and hotter. There is less and less rain.

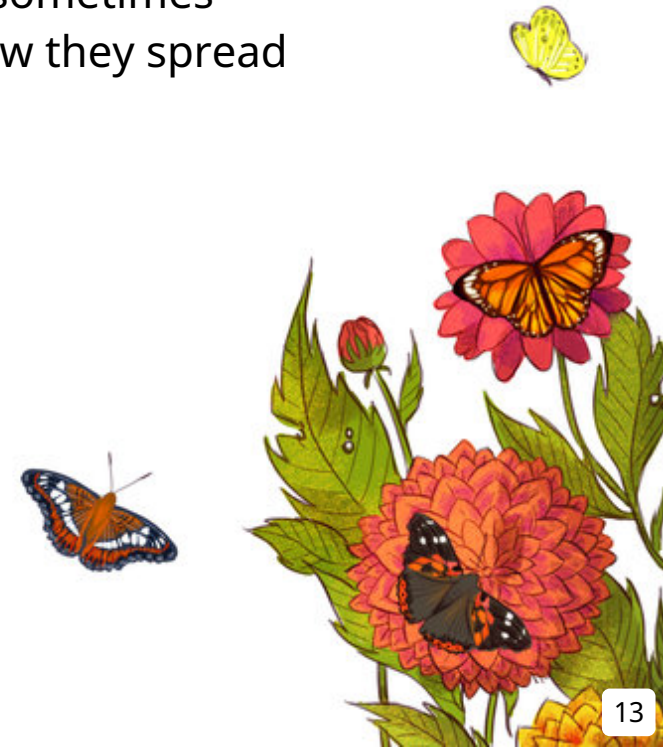
Last year, the river went dry.
The butterflies didn't have enough water to mud-puddle.
Kavya's family didn't have enough water to farm.

That's why they moved to Bengaluru.

"You know a lot about butterflies, Kavya," says Laila Miss.

"That’s because they are my favourite insects," says Kavya.

"Why do you love butterflies so much, Kavya?" asks Mary.

How can Kavya choose just one thing?

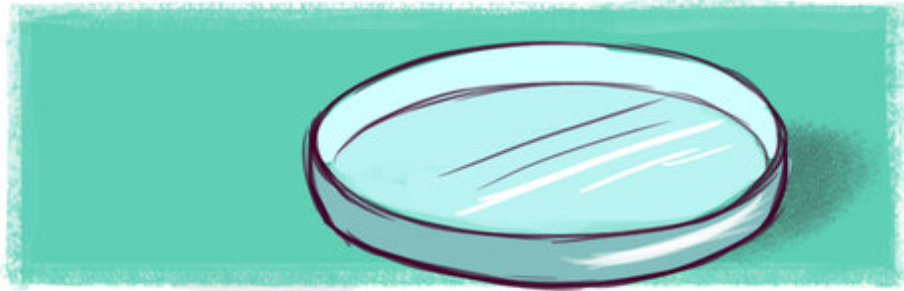
She loves how their bodies are sometimes spotted and sometimes striped. How they drink nectar with their long noses. How they spread pollen, which makes more flowers grow.

"They fly far, but wherever they land, they make new friends," Kavya says, squeezing Mary’s hand. "They’re very small, but they’re also very brave."
"Just like you," Laila Miss says.

Kavya smiles a smile as wide as a butterfly’s wings.

# Make a Butterfly Rest Station

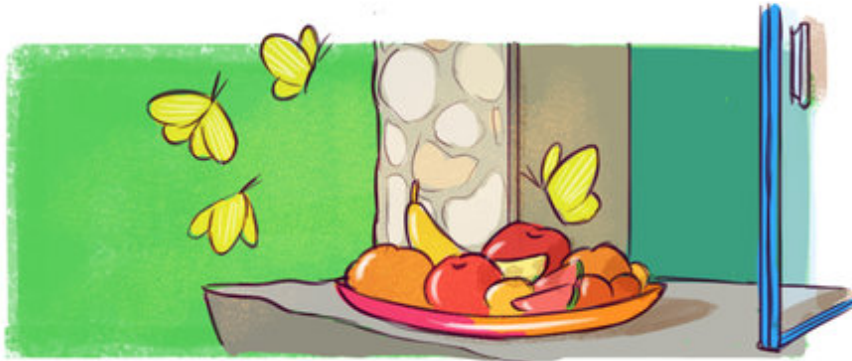
Butterflies in India migrate twice a year. Their journey is getting harder and harder because our forests and rivers are disappearing. Butterflies don't have enough places to rest. Many get tired along the way.

One way to help butterflies is to make safe spaces for them to stop and have a good meal.

## Here’s how to make a butterfly rest station:

Find a flat vessel with high edges, like a thali or a plate.

Butterflies love bright colours. Paint the vessel red, yellow, or orange.

Fill the vessel with butterfly food. It’s easy to make! Mix four cups of water with one cup of sugar.

Add pieces of over-ripe fruit. Butterflies love bananas, guavas, mangoes, papayas, and oranges.

Keep the vessel out on your veranda, windowsill, or anywhere outside.

Clean and refill the vessel every two to three days.

To attract even more butterflies, plant flowers that butterflies love. You can plant verbena, geraniums, dahlias, or sunflowers. You don’t need a lot of space – you can plant them in pots on the ground, or keep them on windowsills.

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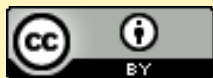


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# A Butterfly Smile
(English)

Kavya's family has just moved from her village to Bengaluru and she is the newest girl in her class. Go along with Kavya as she visits a butterfly park where she discovers a special connection with butterflies and also makes a new friend.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.

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